

Act I.

THE FOUNDLING.

Scene II.



De Wilde pinx^t

Trotter sculp.

MR. MOUNTAIN & FIDELIA.

And see all men's subjects.

London, Printed for J.B. All British Library, Strand 1. Aug. 1732.

BRITISH HEARE.



FOUNDLING.

Fid. *let my tears*
thank you.

Act 2.

Sc 2.

Corbould del.

Springwell sculp.

London. Printed for J. Bell British Library, Strand. Aug¹. 1792.

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THE FOUNDLING.

A
COMEDY.

BY MR. EDWARD MOORE.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

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M DCC XCII.



TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF BEDFORD.

MADAM.

THE permission your Grace honours me with, of presenting the Foundling to your protection, is the highest gratification of my pride, and my best security for the indulgence of the town. It is in writing as in life; an introduction to the world by a great name is a sanction, even where merit is wanting, and can adorn it where it is. And though my pretensions are inconsiderable, my fears are lessened, while I can boast the Dutchess of Bedford for my patroness.

I have no intention to alarm your Grace with the common flattery of dedications. The mind that deserves praise, is above receiving it. Your own consciousness, though in your humblest hours, will afford truer satisfaction than the best written panegyric. But while your Grace forbids me praise, I am at liberty to indulge my wishes for your happiness and honour. In those, I may be allowed to name the Duke of Bedford with his Dutchess, and to rejoice, with every Englishman, that the highest dignities are the reward of the highest merit.

If I descend to say a little of myself, I shall hope for your Grace's pardon. This is my first attempt in dramatic poetry. Whether I deserve the favour the town has shewn me, is submitted to your Grace's candour, and the judgment of my readers. The disapprobation which the character of Faddle met with the first night, made it necessary for me to shorten it in almost every scene, where it was not immediately connected with the fable. But though success has attended the

*alteration, I have ventured to publish it in its original dress ;
submitting it still to your Grace and the public, from whom
I have no appeal to my own partiality. But I am detaining
your Grace too long, and shall only add, that I am,*

Madam,

Your Grace's

Most obliged, and

Most obedient servant,

EDWARD MOORE.

THE FOUNDLING.

THIS Play, though it is now unaccustomed "to visit the
"glimpses of the Moon" upon our Theatres, is better worth
such distinction than many slight flitting shadows, that pass
for things of substance.

One circumstance, which may contribute to this oblivion,
is a resemblance which this Play certainly does discover of
the CONSCIOUS LOVERS.—By some critics it is deemed the
superior play, and the reason given is that its interest is un-
mixed with the episode of menial intrigue, and the flippant
impertinence of a *Footman* and a *Chambermaid*.—To all this
it may be answered, that these characters, when they take
a large share in the business of a comedy, are the agents of
superior persons, and bring about the end of the drama,
are by no means to be rejected by a fastidious delicacy.—
Happily the dull decorum of the French school is sinking
into contempt now even with that nation itself; and men,
when they survey the characters of a *Drama*, only require
that they should be faithful to *Nature*, to be completely
satisfied. We *have* perpetually occasion for servants; *confide*
in them, and are served by them, in our business, in our
pleasure; they also are of our kind, and have business and
pleasures of their *own*.

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. BROOKE.

*UNPRACTIS'D in the Drama's artful page,
And new to all the dangers of the stage,
Where judgment sits to save or damn his play,
Our poet trembles for his first essay.
He, like all authors, a conforming race !
Writes to the taste and genius of the place ;
Intent to fix, and emulous to please
The happy sense of these politer days,
He forms a model of a virtuous sort,
And gives you more of moral than of sport ;
He rather aims to draw the melting sigh,
Or steal the pitying tear from beauty's eye ;
To touch the strings that humanise our kind,
Man's sweetest strain, the music of the mind.
Ladies, he bids me tell you, that from you
His first, his fav'rite character he drew ;
A young, a lovely, inexperience'd maid,
In honest truth and innocence array'd ;
Of fortune destitute, with wrongs oppress'd,
By fraud attempted, and by love distress'd ;
Yet, guarded still, and ev'ry suff'ring past,
Her virtue meets the sure reward at last.
From such examples shall the sex be taught,
How virtue fixes whom their eyes have caught ;
How honour beautifies the fairest face,
Improves the mien, and dignifies the grace.
And hence the libertine, who builds a name
On the base ruins of a woman's fame,*

*Shall own, the best of human blessings lie
In the chaste honours of the nuptial tie ;
There lives the home-felt sweet, the near delight,
There peace reposes, and there joys unite ;
And female virtue was by Heaven design'd
To charm, to polish, and to bless mankind.*

Dramatis Personæ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Sir ROGER BELMONT,	- - - - -	Mr. Fearon.
Sir CHARLES RAYMOND,	- - - - -	Mr. Farren.
Young BELMONT,	- - - - -	Mr. Pope.
Colonel RAYMOND,	- - - - -	Mr. Macready.
VILLIARD,	- - - - -	Mr. Gardner.
FADDLE,	- - - - -	Mr. Lewis.

Women.

ROSETTA,	- - - - -	Mrs. Mattocks.
FIDELIA,	- - - - -	Mrs. Merry.

SCENE, *Sir Roger Belmont's House in London.*



THE FOUNDLING.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Apartment in Sir ROGER BELMONT's House. Enter Young BELMONT and Colonel RAYMOND.

Belmont.

MY dear colonel, you are as unlettered in love as I am in war. What, a woman, a fine woman, a coquette, and my sister!—and to be won by whining! Mercy on us! that a well-built fellow, with common sense, should take pains to unman himself, to tempt a warm girl of two-and-twenty to come to bed to him!—I say, again, and again, colonel, my sister's a woman.

7

Col. And the very individual woman that I want, Charles.

Bel. And of all women in the world the least fit for thee. An April day is less changeable than her humour. She laughs behind her fan at what she should not understand; calls humility meanness, and blushing the want of education. In all affairs with a man, she goes by contraries; if you tell her a merry story, she sighs; if a serious one, she laughs; for yes, she says no, and for no, yes; and is mistress of such obedient features, that her looks are always ready to confirm what her tongue utters.

Col. Fine painting, upon my word, and no flattery! 18

Bel. This is the lady. Now for the lover. A fellow made

up of credulity and suspicion ; believing where he should doubt, and doubting where he should believe ; jealous without cause, and satisfied without proof. A great boy that has lost his way, and blubbering through every road, but the right, to find his home again ; ha, ha, ha !

Col. Mighty florid, indeed, sir !

Bel. Come, come, colonel ; love that can exalt the brute to a man, has set you upon all-fours. Women are indeed delicious creatures ; but not what you think them. The first wish of every mother's daughter is power, the second mischief : the way to her heart is by indifference, or abuse ; for whoever owns her beauty, will feel her tyranny : but if he call her ugly or a fool, she'll set her cap at him, and take pains for his good opinion. 33

Col. And so, submission and flattery are out of our system ?

Bel. For submission and flattery, I substitute impudence and contradiction ; these two, well managed, my dear, will do more with beauty in an hour, than fine speeches in a year. Your fine woman expects adoration, and receives it as common incense, which every fool offers ; while the rude fellow, who tells her truth, claims all attention. Difficulty endears conquest. To him only she appears what she should be to all ; and while she labours with her natural charms to secure him, she's lost herself. 43

Col. Why, faith, Charles, there may be some music in these wild notes ; but I am so far gone in the old ballad, that I can sing no other words to any tune.

Bel. Ha, ha ! Thou poor mournful nightingale in a cage, sing on then ; and I'll whistle an upper part with thee, to give a little life to the measure.

Col. That will be kind ; for Heaven knows I have need of assistance !—Pr'ythee, tell me, dost think Rosetta wants understanding ? 52

Bel. N—o, faith, I think not.

Col. Good-humour?

Bel. Hum—She's generally pleased.

Col. What then can reconcile her behaviour to me, and her fondness for such a reptile as Faddle? A fellow made up of knavery and noise, with scandal for wit, and impudence for raillery; and so needy, that the very devil might buy him for a single guinea. I say, Charles, what can tempt her even to an acquaintance with this fellow? 61

Bel. Why, the very understanding and good-humour you speak of. A woman's understanding is design, and her good humour, mischief. Her advances to one fool are made only to tease another.

Col. Sir, your most humble servant.

Bel. And her good-humour is kept alive by the success of her plots.

Col. But why so constant to her fool? 69

Bel. Because her fool's the fittest for her purpose—He has more tricks than her monkey, more prate than her parrot, more servility than her lap-dog, more lies than her woman, and more wit than her—colonel. And faith, all these things considered, I can't blame my sister for her constancy.

Col. Thou art a wild fellow, and in earnest about nothing but thy own pleasures——and so we'll change the subject. What says Fidelia?

Bel. Why, there, now!—That a man can't instruct another but he must be told, by way of thanks, how much he stands in need of assistance himself.

Col. Any new difficulties? 81

Bel. Mountains, colonel, a few mountains in my way. But if I want faith to remove them, I hope I shall have strength to climb them, and that will do my business.

Col. She's a woman, Charles.

Bel. By her outside one would guess so ; but look a little farther, and, except the stubbornness of her temper, she has nothing feminine about her. She has wit without pertness, beauty without consciousness, pride without insolence, and desire without wantonness. In short, she has every thing—— 91

Col. That you would wish to ruin in her. Why, what a devil are you, Charles, to speak so feelingly of virtues which you only admire to destroy !

Bel. A very pretty comforter, truly !

Col. Come, come, Charles, if she is as well born as you pretend, what hinders you from cherishing these qualities in a wife, which you would ruin in a mistress ? —Marry her, marry her. 99

Bel. And hang myself in her garters the next morning, to give her virtues the reward of widowhood.—Faith, I must read Pamela twice over first. But suppose her not born as I pretend, but the outcast of a beggar, and obliged to chance for a little education.

Col. Why, then her mind is dignified by her obscurity ; and you will have the merit of raising her to a rank which she was meant to adorn. And where's the mighty matter in all this ? You want no addition to your fortune, and have only to sacrifice a little unnecessary pride to necessary happiness.

Bel. Very heroic, upon my word !—And so, my dear colonel, one way or other, I must be married, it seems. 111

Col. If Fidelia can be honest, my life on't, you are of my mind within this fortnight. But, pr'ythee, since I am not to believe your former account of her, who is this delicious girl, that must and will get the better of your pride ?

Bel. A sister of the Graces, without mortal father or mother ; she dropped from the clouds in her cradle, was lulled by the winds, christened by the rains, fostered by a hag,

sold for a whore, sentenced to a rape, and rescued by a rogue—to be ravished by her own consent. There's mystery and hieroglyphic for you! and every syllable, my dear, a truth beyond apocrypha. 122

Col. And what am I to understand by all this?

Bel. Faith, just as much as your understanding can carry. A man in love is not to be trusted with a secret.

Col. And pray, most discreet sir, is Rosetta acquainted with her real history?

Bel. Not a circumstance. She has been amused like you, and still believes her to be the sister of a dead friend of mine at college, bequeathed to my guardianship. But the devil, I find, owes me a grudge for former virtues; for this sister of mine, who dotes upon Fidelia, and believes every thing I have told her of her family and fortune, has very fairly turned the tables upon me.—She talks of equality of birth, forsooth; of virtue, prudence, and good sense; and bids me bless my stars for throwing in my way the only woman in the world that has good qualities enough to redeem my bad ones, and make me—what she says every man ought to be—a good husband. 139

Col. Was ever poor innocent fellow in such distress!—But what says the old gentleman, your father?

Bel. Why, faith, the certainty of a little money would set him at work the same way—But I'll have one trial of skill with them yet.—As I brought her in by one lie, I'll take her out by another—I'll swear she's a whore—that I may get an opportunity to make her one.

Col. Most religiously resolved, upon my word!

Bel. Between you and me, colonel, has not your old gentleman, Sir Charles, a liquorish look-out for Fidelia himself? 150

Col. No, upon my honour. I believe his assiduities there

are more to prevent the designs of another, than to forward any of his own.

Bel. As who should say, because I have no teeth for a crust, I'll muzzle the young dog that has. A pox of every thing that's old, but a woman!—for 'tis but varying her vocation a little, and you may make her as useful at fifty-five as fifteen. But what say you to a little chat with the girls this morning? I believe we shall find them in the next room. 160

Col. Not immediately—I have an appointment at White's.

Bel. For half an hour I am your man there too.—D'ye return so soon?

Col. Sooner, if you will.

Bel. With all my heart. *Allons.*

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter ROSETTA and FIDELIA meeting.

Ros. O, my dear! I was just coming to see if you were dressed. You look as if you had pleasant dreams last night.

Fid. Whatever my dreams were, they can't disturb the morning's happiness of meeting my dear Rosetta so gay and charming. 170

Ros. My sweet creature!—But what were your dreams?

Fid. O, nothing—A confusion of gay castles, built by Hope, and thrown down by Disappointment.

Ros. O barbarous!—Well, for my part, I never built a castle in my sleep that would not last till doomsday. Give me a dream, and I am mistress of the creation. I can do what I will with every man in it—And power, power, my dear, sleeping or waking, is a charming thing!

Fid. Now, in my opinion, a woman has no business with

power—Power admits no equal, and dismisses friendship for flattery. Besides, it keeps the men at a distance, and that is not always what we wish. 182

Ros. But then, my dear, they'll come when we call them, and do what we bid them, and go when we send them—There's something pretty in that sure—And for flattery—take my word for't, 'tis the highest proof of a man's esteem.—'Tis only allowing what one has not, because the fellow admires what one has—And she that can keep that, need not be afraid of believing she has more. 189

Fid. Ay, if she can keep that. But the danger is, in giving up the substance for the shadow.—Come, come, my dear, we are weak by nature; and 'tis but knowing that we are so, to be always upon our guard. Fear may make a woman strong, but confidence undoes her.

Ros. Ha, ha! how different circumstances direct different opinions! You are in love with a rake of a fellow, who makes you afraid of yourself—And I hold in chains a mighty colonel, who's afraid of me. And so, my dear, we both go upon right principles. Your weakness keeps you upon your guard, and my power leaves me without danger.

Fid. And yet you must forgive me, if I tell you, that you love this colonel. 202

Ros. Who told you so, my dear creature?

Fid. I know it by the pains you take to vex him. Besides, I have seen you look as if you did.

Ros. Look, child!—Why, don't I look like other people?

Fid. Ay, like other people in love. Oh, my dear, I have seen just such looks in the glass, when my heart has beat at my very lips.

Ros. Thou art the most provoking creature— 210

Fid. You must pardon me, Rosetta—I have a heart but little inclined to gaiety; and am rather wondering, that

when happiness is in a woman's power, she should neglect it for trifles—or how it should ever enter her thoughts, that the rigour of a mistress can endear the submission of a wife.

Ros. As certain, my dear, as the repentance of a sinner out-weighs in opinion the life of a saint. But, to come to serious confession, I have, besides a woman's inclination to mischief, another reason for keeping off a little—I am afraid of being thought mercenary. 221

Fid. Hey-day!—why, are you not his equal every way?

Ros. That's not it—I have told you, that before his father's return from exile—You know his unhappy attachments to a successful party—This colonel (brought up in our family, and favoured by Sir Roger and my brother) laid violent siege to me for a whole year. Now, though I own I never disliked him, in all that time, either through pride, folly, or a little mischief, I never gave him the least hint, by which he could guess at my inclinations. 230

Fid. Right woman, upon my word!

Ros. 'Tis now about three months since the king, in his goodness, recalled Sir Charles; and, by restoring the estate, made the colonel heir to a fortune more than equal to my expectations. And now, to confess all, the airs that folly gave me before, reason bids me continue—for, to surrender my heart at once to this new-made commander, would look as if the poor colonel had wanted a bribe for the governor. Besides, he has affronted my pride, in daring to imagine I could descend so low, as to be fond of that creature Faddle. A fellow formed only to make one laugh—a cordial for the spleen, to be bought by every body; and just as necessary in a family as a monkey. For which insolence I must and will be revenged. 244

Fid. Well, I confess this looks a little like reason. But

are you sure, all this while, the colonel, in despair, won't raise the siege, and draw off his forces to another place?

Ros. Pshah! I have a better opinion of the men, child. Do but ply them with ill usage, and they are the gentlest creatures in the world. "Like other beasts of prey, you must tame them by hunger—but if once you feed them high, they are apt to run wild, and forget their keepers."

Fid. And are all men so, Rosetta? 253

Ros. By the gravity of that question, I'll be whipped now, if you don't expect me to say something civil of my brother—Take care of him, Fidelia, "for hunger can't tame him, nor fulness make him wilder."—To leave you to his guardianship, was setting the fox to keep the chicken.

Fid. Wild as he is, my heart can never beat to another—And then, I have obligations, that would amaze you. 260

Ros. Obligations!—Let me die, if I would not marry my colonel's papa, and put it out of his power to oblige, or disoblige me.

Fid. Still you banter me with Sir Charles—Upon my life, he has no more designs upon me than you have—I know no reason for his friendship, but his general humanity, or perhaps the singularity of my circumstances.

Ros. Why, as you say, youth and beauty are particular circumstances to move humanity—Ha, ha, ha!—Oh, my dear, time's a great tell-tale, and will discover all—What a sweet mamma shall I have, when I marry the colonel! 271

Enter Young BELMONT, and the Colonel.

Bel. When you marry the colonel, sister!—A match, a match, child!—Here he is just in the nick; and, faith as men go, very excellent stuff for a husband.

Col. Those were lucky words, madam.

Ros. Perhaps not so lucky, if you knew all, sir.—Now, or never, for a little lying, Fidelia, if you love me.

[*Apart to Fid.*

Fid. I'll warrant you, my dear—You must know, sir, [*To Bel.*] that your sister has taken it into her head, that the colonel's father is my lover. 280

Ros. What is she going to say now? [*Aside.*

Fid. And as she looks upon herself to be as good as married to the colonel.

Ros. Who I!—I!—

Fid. She has been settling some family affairs with her new mamma here: and, upon my word, she's a sweet contriver.

Ros. And you think I won't be even with you for this, Fidelia?

Bel. Sister! 290

Col. And was it so, madam?—And may I hope?

Ros. Was it so, madam?—And may I hope? [*Mocking him.*] No, sir, it was not so, and you may not hope. Do you call this wit, Fidelia?

Fid. My dear creature, you must allow me to laugh a little—Ha, ha, ha!

Ros. 'Tis mighty well, madam—Oh, for a little devil at my elbow now, to help out invention. [*Aside.*

Bel. Ha, ha, ha!—Won't it come, sister? 299

Ros. As soon as your manners, brother. You and your grave friend, there, have been genteelly employed indeed, in listening at the door of a lady's chamber: and then, because you heard nothing for your purpose, to turn my own words to a meaning, I should hate myself for dreaming of.

Bel. Why, indeed, child, we might have perplexed you a little, if Fidelia had not so artfully brought you off.

Ros. Greatly obliged to her, really. [*Walking in disorder.*

Col. I never knew, till now, Rosetta, that I could find a pleasure in your uneasiness. 309

Ros. And you think, sir, that I shall easily forgive this insolence? But you may be mistaken, sir.

Bel. Poor thing, how it pants! Come, it shall have a husband! We must about it immediately, colonel, for she's all over in a flame.

Ros. You grow impertinent, brother. Is there no relief?

[*Aside.*

Bel. Shall I lift up the sash for a little air, child?

Enter Servant.

Ros. So, John!—Have you delivered the card I gave you?

Serv. Yes, madam; and Mr. Faddle desires his compliments to your ladyship, and Madam Fidelia.

Ros. Mr. Faddle, John!—Where did you see him? 320

Serv. He met me in the street, madam, and made me step into a coffee-house with him, 'till he wrote this, madam.

[*Delivers a letter, and exit.*

Ros. Oh, the kind creature!—Here's a letter from Mr. Faddle, Fidelia!—Fortune, I thank thee for this little respite.

[*Aside, and reading the Letter.*

Col. Does she suffer the fool to write to her too?

Fid. What, pining, colonel, in the midst of victory?

Col. To receive his letters, madam!—I shall run mad.

Bel. So! Away prop, and down scaffold—All's over, I see.

Ros. Oh, Fidelia!—You shall hear it—You shall all hear it—And there's something in't about the colonel too. 331

Col. About me, madam.

[*Peevishly.*

Ros. Nay, colonel, I am not at all angry now. Methinks this letter has made me quite another creature.—To be sure, Mr. Faddle has the most gallant way of writing! But his own words will speak best for him. [*Reads.*

‘ Dear creature,

Since I saw you yesterday, time has hung upon me like a winter in the country ; and unless you appear at rehearsal of the new opera this morning, my sun will be in total eclipse for two hours. Lady Fanny made us laugh last night, at What’s my thought like, by comparing your colonel to a great box o’ the ear——because it was very rude, she said, and what nobody cared for.——I have a thousand things to say, but the clamour of a coffee-house is an interruption to the sentiments of love and veneration with which I am,

Madam, most unspeakably yours, WM. FADDLE.’
——Is it not very polite, colonel ?

Col. Extremely, madam !——Only a little out as to the box o’ the ear ; for you shall see him take it, madam, as carelessly as a pinch of snuff. 351

Ros. Fie, colonel ! you would not quarrel before a lady, I hope. Fidelia, you must oblige me with your company to the rehearsal——I’ll go put on my capuchin, and step into the coach, this moment.

Fid. I am no friend to public places ; but I’ll attend you, madam.

Ros. You’ll come, colonel ?

Col. To be sure, madam. 359

Bel. Sister !——Oh, you’re a good creature !

[Exit Rosetta laughing affectedly.]

Fid. Shall we have your company, sir ! [To Bel.

Bel. We could find a way to employ time better, child——But I am your shadow, and must move with you every where. [Exit Fidelia.]——Ha, ha, ha !——How like a beaten general dost thou look now !——While the enemy is upon the march, to proclaim *Te Deum* for a complete victory.

Col. I am but a man, Charles, and find myself no match for the devil and a woman. 368

Bel. Courage, boy!—and the flesh and the devil may be subdued—Ha, ha, ha!—Such a colonel! [Exit.

“*Col.* Why this it is to be in love!—Well!—Let me
“but slip my leading-strings!—and if ever I am a woman’s
“baby again!

“*To cheat our wishes nature meant the sex,* 374

“*And form’d them less to please us, than perplex.*” [Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter Sir ROGER BELMONT, and Sir CHARLES RAYMOND.

Sir Roger.

A VORACIOUS young dog!—Must I feed ortolans to pamper his gluttony!

Sir Char. Be under no apprehensions, Sir Roger; Mr. Belmont’s excesses are mitigated by the levity of youth, and a too early indulgence. In his moments of thinking, I know him generous and noble—And for Fidelia;—I think I can be answerable for her conduct, both in regard to what she owes herself, and you. 8

Sir Ro. Why, look you, Sir Charles, the girl’s a sweet girl, and a good girl—and beauty’s a fine thing, and virtue’s a fine thing—But as for marriage!—Why—a man may buy fine things too dear. A little money, Sir Charles, would set off her beauty, and find her virtue employment—But the young rogue does not say a word of that, of late.

Sir Char. Nor of marriage, I am sure—His love of liberty will prevent your fears one way; and, I hope, Fidelia’s honour, another.

Sir Ro. Must not have her ruined though!

18

Sir Char. Fear it not, Sir Roger—And when next you see your son, be a little particular in your enquiries about her family and circumstances—If she is what her behaviour bespeaks her, and he pretends, a lady of birth and fortune—why, secrets are unnecessary : if he declines an explanation, look upon the whole as a contrivance to cover purposes, which we must guard against.

Sir Ro. What, you don't think the rogue has had her, hah, Sir Charles? 27

Sir Char. No, upon my honour—I hold her innocence to be without stain—But to deal freely with my friend, I look upon her story as strange and improbable.—An orphan, of beauty, family, and fortune ; committed by a dying brother to the sole care of a licentious young fellow !—You must pardon me, Sir Roger.

Sir Ro. Pray go on, sir.

Sir Char. Brought in at midnight too !—And then a young creature, so educated, and so irresistibly amiable, to be, in all appearance, without alliance, friend, or acquaintance in the wide world !—a link, torn off from the general chain !—I say, Sir Roger, this is strange.

Sir Ro. By my troth and so it is ! 40

Sir Char. I know not why I am so interested in this lady's concerns ; but yesterday, I indulged my curiosity with her, perhaps, beyond the bounds of good-manners—I gave a loose to my suspicion, and added oaths of secrecy to my enquiries. But her answers only served to multiply my doubts ; and still as I persisted, I saw her cheeks covered with blushes, and her eyes swimming in tears—But my life upon't, they were the blushes and the tears of innocence !

Sir Ro. We must and will be satisfied, Sir Charles. 49

Sir Char. For who knows, while we are delaying, but some unhappy mother, perhaps of rank too, may be wringing her

hands in bitterness of misery for this lost daughter.—Girls, who have kept their virtue, Sir Roger, have done mad things for a man they love.

Sir Ro. And so indeed they have—I remember when I was a young fellow myself——But is not that my Charles coming through the hall yonder? 57

Sir Char. Ay, Sir Roger. Attack him now—But let your enquiries have more the shew of accidental chat than design; for too much earnestness may beget suspicion—And so, sir, I leave you to your discretion. [*Exit.*]

Sir Ro. You shall see me again before dinner—A pox of these young, rakehellly rogues!—a girl's worth twenty of them—if one could but manage her.

Enter Young BELMONT, repeating,

Bel. No warning of th' approaching flame,
Swiftly like sudden death, it came;
Like mariners, by lightning kill'd,
I burnt the moment——

My dear sir, I have not seen you to-day before!

Sir Ro. What, studying poetry, boy, to help out the year's allowance? 71

Bel. Faith, sir, times are hard—and unless you come down with a fresh hundred now and then, I may go near to disgrace your family—and turn poet.

Sir Ro. And so want friends all thy life after! But now we talk of money, Charles, what art thou doing with Fidelity's money! I am thinking, that a round sum thrown into the stocks now, might turn to a pretty tolerable account.

Bel. The stocks, sir? 79

Sir Ro. Ay, boy. My broker will be here after dinner, and he shall have a little chat with thee, about laying out a few of her thousands.

Bel. I hope he'll tell us where we shall get these thousands.

[*Aside.*

Sir Ro. Thou dost not answer me, Charles——Art dumb, boy?

Bel. Why, to be sure, sir, as to that——Fidelia—I cann't say, but that she may——However, that is, you know, sir——If as to possibility——Will your broker be here after dinner, sir?

Sir Ro. Take a little time, Charles; for, at present, thou dost not make thyself so clearly understood. 91

Bel. Quite right to be sure, sir——Nothing could, beyond all doubt, be more judicious, or more advantageous——Her interest, sir——why as to that——a pretty fortune——but——did you know her brother, sir?

Sir Ro. Who I, child?——No.

Bel. Faith, nor I neither. [*Aside.*]——Not know Jack, sir?——The rogue would have made you laugh.——Did I never read you any of his epigrams?——But then he had such an itch for play!——Why he would set you a whole fortune at a cast!——And such a mimic too!——But no œconomy in the world——Why, it cost him a cool six thousand, to stand for member once——Oh, I could tell you such stories of that election, sir—— 104

Sir Ro. Pr'ythee, what borough did he stand for?

Bel. Lord, sir!——He was flung all to nothing——My Lord What-d'ye-call-um's son carried it fifteen to one, at half the expence——In short, sir, by his extravagance, affairs are so perplexed, so very intricate, that, upon my word, sir, I declare it, I don't know what to think of them——A pox of these questions! [*Aside.*

Sir Ro. But she has friends and relations, Charles:——I fancy, if I knew who they were, something might be done.

Bel. Yes, yes, sir, she has friends and relations——I see,

you know nothing of her affairs—Such a string of them! The only wise thing her brother ever did, was making me her guardian, to take her out of the reach of those wretches—I shall never forget his last words—Whatever you do, my dear Charles, says he, taking me by the hand, keep that girl from her relations. Why, I would not for a thousand pounds, sir, that any of them should know where she is.

Sir Ro. Why we have been a little cautious, Charles—
But where does the estate lie? 123

Bel. Lord, sir!—an estate and no estate—I wonder a man of your knowledge would ask the question. An earthquake may swallow it for any thing I care.

Sir Ro. But where does it lie, Charles?—In what county, I say?

Bel. And then there's the six thousand pounds, that her father left her— 130

Sir Ro. What! that gone too, Charles?

Bel. Just as good, I believe—Every shilling on't in a lawyer's hands.

Sir Ro. But she is not afraid to see him too, Charles?—Where does he live?

Bel. Live, sir!—Do you think such a fellow ought to live?—Why, he has trumped up a contract of marriage with this girl, sir, under the penalty of her whole fortune—There's a piece of work for you!

Sir Ro. But has he no name, Charles?—What is he called, I say? 141

Bel. You can't call him by any name that's too bad for him—But if I don't draw his gown over his ears—why, say I am a bad guardian, sir—that's all.

Sir Ro. If this should be apocryphal now?

Bel. Sir?

Sir Ro. A fetch, a fib, Charles!—to conceal some honest man's daughter that you have stolen, child!

Bel. And brought into a sober family, to have the entire possession of, without lett or molestation?—Why, what a deal of money have you lavished away, sir, upon the education of a fool?

152

Sir Ro. There is but that one circumstance to bring thee off—For, to be sure, her affairs might have been as well settled in private lodgings—And besides, Charles, a world of troublesome questions, and lying answers, might have been saved.—But take care, boy—for I may be in the secret before thou art aware on't—A great rogue, Charles!

[Exit.

Bel. So! the mine's sprung, I see, and Fidelia has betrayed me. And yet, upon cooler thoughts, she durst not break her word with me; for, though she's a woman, the devil has no part in her—Now will I be hanged, if my loving sister is not at the bottom of all this—But if I don't outplot her!—Let me see!—Ay—Faddle shall be called in—for the fool loves mischief like an old maid; and will outlie an attorney.

Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. What, musing, brother!—Now would I fain know, which of all the virtues has been the subject of your contemplations?

169

Bel. Patience, patience, child—for he that has connection with a woman, let her be wife, mistress, or sister, must have patience.

Ros. The most useful virtue in the world, brother!—and Fidelia shall be your tutoress.—I'll hold six to four, that she leads you into the practice on't with more dexterity than the best philosopher in England.—She shall teach it, and yet keep the heart without hope, brother.

Bel. Why, that's a contrary method to yours, sister—for you give hope when you mean to try patience most—

and I take it that you are the abler mistress in the art.—
Why, every coxcomb in town has been your scholar, child.

Ros. Not to learn patience—there's your mistake now;
for it has been my constant practice to put my scholars out
of all patience. What are you thinking of, brother?

Bel. Why, I was thinking, child, that 'twould be a ques-
tion to puzzle a conjurer, what a coquette was made for?

Ros. Am I one, brother?

Bel. Oh, fie, sister!

188

Ros. Lord! I that am no conjurer, can tell you that—
A coquette!—Oh!—Why, a coquette is a sort of beautiful
desert in wax-work, that tempts the fool to an entertain-
ment, merely to baulk his appetite.—And will any one tell
me that nature had no hand in the making a coquette, when
she answers such wise and necessary purposes?—Now, pray,
sir, tell me what a rake was made for?

Bel. Am I one, sister?

Ros. Oh, fie, brother!

197

Bel. Nay, child, if a coquette be so useful in the system
of morals, a rake must be the most horrid thing in nature—
He was born for her destruction, child—she loses her being
at the very sight of him—and drops plump into his arms,
like a charmed bird into the mouth of a rattle-snake.

Ros. Bless us all!—What a mercy it is that we are brother
and sister!

Bel. Be thankful for't night and morning upon your
knees, hussy—for I should certainly have been the ruin of
you—But come, Rosetta—'tis allowed then that we are
rake and coquette—And now, do you know, that the es-
sential difference between us lies only in two words—petti-
coat and breeches.

210

Ros. Ay, make that out, and you'll do something.

Bel. Pleasure, child, is the business of both—and the same

principles that make me a rake, would make you—no better than you should be—were it not for that tax upon the petticoat called scandal. Your wishes are restrained by fear; mine, authorised by custom: and while you are forced to sit down with the starved comfort of making men fools, I am—upon the wing to make girls—women, child.

Ros. Now, as I hope to be married, I would not be a rake for the whole world—unless I were a man; and then, I do verily believe, I should turn out just such another. 221

Bel. That's my dear sister!—Give me your hand, child. —Why, now thou art the honestest girl in St. James's parish—and I'll trust thee for the future with all my secrets—I am going to Fidelia, child.

Ros. What a pity 'tis, brother, that she is not such a coquette as I am?

Bel. Not so, neither, my sweet sister; for, faith, the conquest will be too easy to keep a man constant.

Ros. Civil creature! 230

Bel. But here comes the colonel—Now to our several vocations—You to fooling, and I to business—At dinner we'll meet, and compare notes, child.

Ros. For a pot of coffee, I succeed best.

Bel. Faith, I'm afraid so. [*Exit.*]

Enter Colonel RAYMOND.

Col. To meet you alone, madam, is a happiness—

Ros. Pray, colonel, are you a rake? Methinks I would fain have you a rake.

Col. Why so, madam?—'Tis a character I never was fond of. 240

Ros. Because I am tired of being a coquette—and my brother says, that a rake can transform one, in the flirt of a fan.

Col. I would be any thing, madam, to be better in your opinion.

Ros. If you were a rake now, what would you say to me?

Col. Nothing, madam—I would——

[Snatches her hand, and kisses it.]

Ros. Bless me!—is the man mad!——I only asked what you would say to me? 249

Col. I would say, madam, that you are my life, my soul, my angel!——That all my hopes of happiness are built upon your kindness!

Ros. Very well!——keep it up!

Col. That your smiles are brighter than virtue, and your chains sweeter than liberty!

Ros. Upon my word!

Col. Oh, Rosetta!——How can you trifle so with a heart that loves you?

Ros. Very well!——Pathetic too! 259

“Col. Nay, nay, this is carrying the jest too far—If you
“knew the situation of my mind, you would not torture me
“thus.

“Ros. Situation of the mind!——Very geographical!——
“Go on! .

“Col. Pshah!——This is not in your nature.

“Ros. Suspicion!——Pretty enough!

“Col. You know I have not deserved this.

“Ros. Anger too!”——Go on!

Col. No, madam, Faddle can divert you this way at an easier price. 270

Ros. And jealousy!——All the vicissitudes of love!——Incomparable!

Col. You will force me to tell you, madam, that I can bear to be your jest no longer.

Ros. Or thus——

Am I the jest of her I love?

Forbid it all the gods above!

—It may be rendered either way— But I am for the rhyme—I love poetry vastly—Don't you love poetry, colonel? 280

Col. This is beyond all patience, madam. [*Very angrily.*

Ros. Bless me!—Why, you have not been in earnest, colonel?—Lord, Lord, how a silly woman may be mistaken!

Col. Shall I ask you one serious question, madam?

Ros. Why, I find myself somewhat whimsical this morning—and I don't care if I do take a little stuff—but don't let it be bitter.

Col. Am I to be your fool always, madam, or, like other fools, to be made a husband of when my time's out? 290

Ros. Lord, you men-creatures do ask the strangest questions!—Why, how can I possibly say now, what I shall do ten years hence?

Col. I am answered, madam. [*Walking in disorder.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Mr. Faddle, madam.

[*Exit.*

Enter FADDLE.

Fad. Oh, my dear, soft toad!—And the colonel, by all that's scarlet!—Now, pox catch me if nature ever formed so complete a couple—since the first pair in Paradise.

Ros. 'Tis well you are come, Faddle—Give me something to laugh at, or I shall die with the spleen. 300

Col. Ay, sir, make the lady laugh this moment, or I shall break your bones, rascal.

Fad. Lord, colonel!—What!—what!—hah!—

Col. Make her laugh this instant, I say, or I'll make you

cry—Not make her laugh when she bids you!—Why, sirrah!—I have made her laugh this half hour without bidding.

Ros. Ha, ha, ha!

Fad. Why, there, there, there, colonel?—She does, she does, she does?—

311

Enter Young BELMONT, and FIDELIA.

Bel. Why, how now, Faddle!—What has been the matter, pr'ythee?

Col. A rascal!—Not make a lady laugh.

Fad. What, Charles, and my little Fiddy, too!—Stand by me a little—for this robust colonel has relaxed my very sinews, and quite tremulated my whole system.—I could not have collected myself without your presence.

Fid. And was he angry with you, Faddle?

319

Fad. To a degree, my dear—But I have forgot it—I bear no malice to any one in the world, child.

Ros. Do you know, Faddle, that I have a quarrel with you too?

Fad. You, child!—Heh! heh!—What, I am inconstant, I suppose—and have been the ruin of a few families this winter, hah, child?—Murder will out, though it's done in the centre—But come, *vicace!* Let the storm loose—and you shall see me weather it, like the osier in the fable—It may bend, but not break me.

329

Ros. Nay, it shall come in a breeze—I'll whisper it.

[*Whispers Faddle.*]

Bel. Colonel!

Col. Now I could cut my throat for being vexed at this puppy: and yet the devil jealousy will have it so.

[*Apart to Belmont.*]

Fad. Oh, what a creature have you named, child!—

Heh, heh, heh!—May grace renounce me, and darkness seal my eye-lids, if I would not as soon make love to a milliner's doll.

Bel. Pr'ythee, what mistress has she found out for thee, Faddle? 339

Fad. By all that's odious, Charles, Miss Gargle, the 'pothecary's daughter: the toad is fond of me, that's positive; but such a mess of water-gruel!—Ugh!—To all purposes of joy, she's an armful of dry shavings! And then she's so jealous of one!—Lord, says she, Mr. Faddle, you are eternally at Sir Roger's: one can't set eyes upon you in a whole day—Heh, heh! And then the tears do so trickle down those white-wash cheeks of hers, that if she could but warm me to the least fit of the heart-burn, I believe I should be tempted to take her, by way of chalk and water.—Heh, heh, heh! 350

Bel. Ros. Fid. Ha, ha, ha!

Ros. Isn't he a pleasant creature, colonel?

Col. Certainly, madam: of infinite wit, with abundance of modesty.

Fad. Pugh!—Pox of modesty, colonel!—But do you know, you slim toad you—[*To Roset.*—]—what a battle I had last night, in a certain company, about you and that ugly gipsy there?

Fid. Meaning me, sir? 359

Fad. Pert and pretty!—You must know, there was Jack Taffety, Billy Cruel, Lord Harry Gymp, and I, at Jack's lodgings, all in tip-top spirits, over a pint of burgundy—a pox of all drinking though! I shall never get it out of my head.—Well, we were toasting a round of beauties, you must know: the girl of your heart, Faddle, says my lord. Rosetta Belmont, my lord, says I—and, faith, down you went, you delicate devil you, in almost half a glass.—Rot

your toast, says my lord, I was fond of her last winter.—She's a wit, says Jack ; and a scold, by all that's noisy, says Billy.—Isn't she a little freckled, says my lord ? Damnationally padded, says Jack ; and painted like a Dutch doll, by Jupiter, says Billy. She's very unsusceptible, says my lord. No more warmth than a snow-ball, says Jack.—A mere cold-bath to a lover, curse catch me, says Billy.—Heh, heh, heh ! says I, that's because you want heart to warm her, my dears : to me now, she's all over combustibles ; I can electrify her by a look : touch but her lip, and snap she goes off in a flash of fire.

Ros. O, the wretch ! what a picture has he drawn of me !

[To *Fidelia*.

Fid. You must be curious, my dear. 380

Bel. Ha, ha ! But you forgot *Fidelia*, Faddle.

Fad. Oh !—And there's the new face, says Billy—*Fidelia*, I think they call her.—If she was an appurtenance of mine, says my lord, I'd hang her upon a peg in my wardrobe, amongst my cast clothes.—With those demure looks of hers, says Jack, I'd send her to my aunt in Worcestershire, to set her face by, when she went to church. Or, what think you, says Billy, of keeping her in a show-glass, by way of—gentlemen and ladies, walk in, and see the curiosity of curiosities—the perfect *Pamela* in high life ! Observe, gentlemen, the blushing of her cheeks, the turning up of her eyes, and her tongue, that says nothing but fie ! fie !—Ha, ha, ha !—Incomparable ! said all three—Pugh, pox, says I, not so bad as that neither : the little toad has not seen much of the town indeed : but she'll do in time ; and a glass of preniac may serve one's turn, you know, when champaign is not to be had.

[Bowing to *Rosetta*.

All. Ha, ha, ha !

“ *Bel.* Why, thou didst give it them, faith, bully.

“ *Fid.* I think, Rosetta, we were mighty lucky in an advertisement. 401

“ *Ros.* Prodigious!

“ *Fad.* Poor toads!—Oh!—I had forgot: you left the rehearsal of the new opera this morning in the most unlucky time! The very moment you were gone, souse came into the pit, my friend the alderman and his fat wife, tricked out in sun-shine: you must know, I drank chocolate with them in the morning, and heard all the ceremony of their proceedings—Sir Barnaby, says my lady, “I shall wear my pink and silver, and my best jewels; and, d’ye hear! Do you get Betty to tack on your dresdens, and let Pompey comb out the white tie, and bring down the blue coat, lined with buff, and the brown silk breeches, and the gold-headed cane: I think, as you always wear your coat buttoned, that green waistcoat may do; but ’tis so besmeared, that I vow it’s a filthy sight with your night-gown open: and as you go in the coach with me, you may get your white stockings aired—But you are determined never to oblige me with a pair of roll-ups upon these occasions, notwithstanding all I have said. We are to mix with quality this morning, Mr. Faddle, and it may be proper to let them know as how, there are people in the city, who live of the Westminster side of Wapping. Your ladyship’s perfectly in the right, madam, says I—[*Stifling a laugh.*] and for fear of a horse-laugh in her face, slap-dash, I made a leg, and brushed off like lightning.

“ *All.* Ha, ha, ha!”

Enter Servant, and whispers ROSETTA.

Ros. Come, gentlemen, dinner waits—We shall have all your companies, I hope. 429

Bel. You know, you dine with me at the King's-Arms, Faddle. [*Apart to Faddle.*]

Fad. Do I? I am sorry, my dear creature, that a particular appointment robs me of the honour. [*To Rosetta.*]

Ros. Pshah! you are always engaged, I think.—Come, Fidelia. [*Exeunt Rosetta and Fidelia.*]

Col. Why then, thank Heaven, there's some respite.

[*Exit.*]

Bel. Hark you, Faddle; I hope you are not in the least ignorant, that upon particular occasions, you can be a very great rascal? 439

Fad. Who I, Charles?—Pugh!—Pox!—Is this the dinner I am to have?

Bel. Courage, boy! And because I think so well of thee, there: [*Gives him a purse.*] 'twill buy thee a new laced coat, and a feather.

Fad. Why ay, this is something, Charles. But what am I to do, hah? I won't fight, upon my soul, I won't fight.

Bel. Thou canst lie a little.

Fad. A great deal, Charles, or I have spent my time among women of quality to little purpose. 449

Bel. I'll tell thee then. This sweet girl, this angel, this stubborn Fidelia, sticks so at my heart, that I must either get the better of her, or run mad.

Fad. And so thou wouldst have me aiding and abetting, hah, Charles? Must not be tucked up for a rape neither.

Bel. Peace, fool! About three months ago, by a very extraordinary adventure, this lady dropped into my arms. It happened that our hearts took fire at first sight—But, as the devil would have it, in the hurry of my first thoughts, not knowing where to place her, I was tempted, for security, to bring her to this haunted house here, where, between the jealousy of Sir Charles, the gravity of the colonel,

the curiosity of a sister, and the awkward care of a father, she must become a vestal, or I—a husband. 463

Fad. And so, by way of a little simple fornication, you want to remove her to private lodgings, hah, Charles?

Bel. But how, how, how—thou dear rascal?

Fad. Let me see—Hum—And so you are not her guardian, Charles?

Bel. Nor she the woman she pretends, boy—I tell thee, she was mine by fortune—I tilted for her at midnight——But the devil tempted me, I say, to bring her hither——The family was in bed, which gave me time for contrivance——I prevailed upon her to call me guardian——that, by pretending authority over her, I might remove her at pleasure——But here too I was deceived——My sister's fondness for her has rendered every plot of mine to part them impracticable——And, without thy wicked assistance, we must both die in our virginity. 478

Fad. Hum!—That would be a pity, Charles—But let me see—Ay—I have it. Within these three hours, we'll contrive to set the house in such a flame, that the devil himself may take her—if he stand at the street-door. To dinner, to dinner, boy! 'Tis here, here, here, Charles!

Bel. If thou dost——

Fad. And if I don't——why, no more purses, Charles. I tell thee, 'tis here, here, boy! To dinner, to dinner!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter ROSETTA and FIDELIA.

Fidelia.

'Tis all your own doing, my dear. You first tease him into madness, and then wonder to hear his chains rattle.

Ros. And yet how one of my heavenly smiles sobered him again.

Fid. If I were a man, you should use me so but once, Rosetta. 6

Ros. Pshah!—If you were a man, you would do as men do, child—Ha, ha, ha!—They are creatures of robust constitutions, and will bear a great deal—Besides, for my part, I can't see what a reasonable fellow ought to expect before marriage, but ill usage.—You can't imagine, my dear, how it sweetens kindness afterwards——“'Tis bringing a poor starved creature to a warm fire, after a whole “night's wandering through frost and snow.

“*Fid.* But, to carry on the image, my dear—won't he be “apt to curse the tongue that misguided him; and take up “with the first fire he meets with, rather than perish in the “cold?——I could sing you a song, Rosetta, that one “would swear was made o' purpose for you.

“*Ros.* O, pray let me hear it. 20

SONG by Fidelia.

“*For a shape, and a bloom, and an air, and a mien,*
“*Myrtilla was brightest of all the gay green;*
“*But artfully wild, and affectedly coy,*
“*Those her beauties invited, her pride would destroy.*

“*By the flocks as she stray'd with the nymphs of the vale,*
“*Not a shepherd but woo'd her to hear his soft tale;*
“*Tho' fatal the passion, she laugh'd at the swain,*
“*And return'd with neglect, what she heard with disdain.*

“*But beauty has wings, and too hastily flies,*
“*And love unrewarded soon sickens and dies.* 30

" *The nymph cur'd by time, of her folly and pride,*
 " *Now sighs in her turn for the bliss she deny'd.*

" *No longer she frolics it wide o'er the plain,*
 " *To kill with her coyness the languishing swain ;*
 " *So humbled her pride is, so soften'd her mind,*
 " *That, tho' courted by none, she to all would be kind.*

" *Ros.* Pshah ! there's a song indeed !—You should sing
 " of men's perjuries, my dear——of kind nymphs, and cloy'd
 " shepherds"——For, take my word for't, there's no
 charm like cruelty, to keep the men constant ; nor no deformity like kindness, to make them loath you. 41

Enter Servant.

Serv. A letter for your ladyship, madam. [Exit.

Ros. For me ? I don't remember the hand.

[*Opens and reads the letter to herself.*

Fid. " I have little inclination to be cheerful, though I
 " sing songs, and prattle thro' the whole day—Belmont !
 " Belmont ! [*Aside.*] You seem strangely concerned, madam
 ——I hope no ill news.

Ros. The worst in the world, Fidelia, if it be true.

Fid. Pray Heaven it be false then !——But must it be a
 secret ?——I hope, my dear Rosetta knows, that whatever
 affects her quiet, can't leave mine undisturbed. 51

Ros. Who's there ?

Enter Servant.

How did you receive this letter ?

Serv. From a porter, madam.

Ros. Is he without ?

Serv. No, madam ; he said it required no answer.

Ros. Had you any knowledge of him?

Serv. Not that I remember, madam.

Ros. Should you know him again?

Serv. Certainly, madam.

60

Ros. Where did my brother say he dined to-day?

Serv. At the King's Arms, madam.

Ros. And Mr. Faddle with him?

Serv. They went out together, madam.

Ros. Run this moment, and say I desire to speak with both of them immediately, upon an extraordinary affair.

Serv. Yes, madam.

[Exit.

Fid. What can this mean, Rosetta?—Am I unfit to be trusted.

Ros. Tell me, Fidelia—But no matter—Why should I disturb you?—I have been too grave.

71

Fid. Still more and more perplexing!—But my enquiries are at an end—I shall learn to be less troublesome, as you are less kind, Rosetta.

Ros. Pr'ythee don't talk so, Fidelia—I can never be less kind.

Fid. Indeed, I won't deserve you should.

Ros. I know it, Fidelia.—But tell me then—Is there a circumstance in your life, that would call a blush to your cheeks, if 'twere laid as open to the world's knowledge, as to your own?

81

Fid. If from the letter you ask me that strange question, madam, surely I should see it.

Ros. I think not, Fidelia—For, upon second thoughts, 'tis a trifle, not worth your notice.

Fid. Why were you so much alarmed then?

Ros. I confess, it startled me at first—But 'tis a lying letter and should not trouble you.

Fid. Then it relates to me, madam?

Ros. No matter, Fidelia.

90

Fid. I have lost my friend, then——I begged at first, to be a sharer in Rosetta's griefs—but now I find they are all my own, and she denies my right to them.

Ros. This is too much, Fidelia——And now to keep you longer in suspense would be cruelty.—But the writer of this scroll has a mind darker than night.—You shall join with me in wondering, that there is such a monster in the world.

[*Reads.*

‘*To Miss Rosetta Belmont.*

‘*Madam,*

99

‘*As I write without a name, I am alike indifferent to your thanks or resentment.—Fidelia is not what she seems—She has deceived you, and may your brother, to his ruin. Women of the town know how to wear the face of innocence, when it serves the purposes of guilt.—Faddle, if he pleases can inform you farther—But be assured, I have my intelligence from more sufficient authority.*

‘*P. S. There needs no farther address in this matter, than a plain question to Fidelia—Is she the sister of Mr. Belmont's friend ?*

109

Fid. Then I am lost.

[*Aside.*

Ros. What, in tears, Fidelia ?——Nay, I meant to raise your contempt only——Pr'ythee, look up, and let us laugh at the malice of this nameless libeller.

Fid. No, Rosetta——The mind must be wrapt in its own innocence that can stand against the storms of malice——I fear I have not that mind.

Ros. What mind, Fidelia ?

Fid. And yet that letter is a false one.

118

Ros. Upon my life, it is—For you are innocence itself.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta !——No sister of Mr. Belmont's friend kneels to you for pardon—but a poor wretched out-cast of

fortune, that with an artful tale has imposed upon your nature, and won you to a friendship for a helpless stranger that never knew herself.

Ros. Rise, Fidelia—But take care!—For if you have deceived me, honesty is nothing but a name.

Fid. Think not too hardly of me neither—For tho' I am not what I seem, I would not be what that letter calls me, to be mistress of the world. 129

Ros. I have no words, Fidelia—Speak on—But methinks you should not weep so.

Fid. Nay, now, Rosetta, you compel me—For this gentleness is too much for me—I have deceived you, and you are kind—If you would dry up my tears, call forth your resentment—Anger might turn me into stone—but compassion melts me.

Ros. I have no anger, Fidelia. Pray go on. 137

Fid. When my tears will let me—I have played a foolish game, Rosetta—and yet my utmost fault has been consenting to deceive you. What I am, I know not—That I am not what I seem, I know.—But why I have seemed otherwise than I am, again I know not.—'Tis a riddle that your brother only can explain.—He knows the story of my life, and will in honour reveal it. Would he were here!

Ros. Would he were, Fidelia!—for I am upon the rack—Pr'ythee go on, and inform me farther.

Fid. There's my grief, Rosetta—For I am bound by such promises to silence, that, to clear my innocence, would be to wound it.—All I have left to say, is, that my condition of life only has been assumed, my virtue never. 150

Enter Servant.

Ros. Well, sir!

Ser. Mr. Belmont, madam, was just gone: but Mr. Faddle will wait upon your ladyship immediately.

Ros. Did they say where my brother went?

Ser. They did not know.—Mr. Faddle is here, madam.

[*Exit.*

Enter FADDLE, humming a tune.

Fad. In obedience to your extraordinary commands, madam——But you should have been alone, child.

Ros. No trifling, sir——Do you know this hand-writing?

[*Gives him the letter.*

Fad. Hum!——Not I, as I hope to be saved——Nor you neither, I believe. [*Aside.*]——Is it for my perusal, madam?

Fid. And your answering too, sir. 161

Fad. Mighty well, madam.—[*Reads.*]——Hum!——Fidelia—Women of the town—Innocence—Guilt——Faddle inform you farther!——Why, what a pox am I brought in for?——Intelligence—Question—Fidelia—Sister of Mr. Belmont's friend.

[*Stares and whistles.*

Ros. Well, sir?

[*Takes the letter.*

Fad. Oh!——I am to guess at the writer——Cann't, upon my soul——Upon my soul I cann't, child——'Tis a woman, I believe though, by the damned blabbing that's in't. 170

Fid. The letter says, sir, that you can inform this lady farther concerning me.——Now, sir, whatever you happen to know, or to have heard of me, deliver it freely, and without disguise.—I entreat it, as an act of friendship, that will for ever oblige me.

Fad. Let me see——No——It cann't be her neither——She is a woman of too much honour—and yet, I don't remember to have opened my lips about it to any soul but her.

Fid. You know me then, sir?

Ros. Speak out, sir. 180

Fan. Methinks, if these letter-writers were a little more communicative of their own names, and less so of their

neighbours, there would be more honesty in them.—Why am I introduced here!—Truly, forsooth, because a certain person of the world is overburthened with the secrets of her own slips, and, for a little vent, chooses to blab those of another—Faddle inform you farther!—Faddle will be damned as soon.

Ros. Hark you, sir—If you intend to enter these doors again, tell me all you know, for I will have it. You have owned your telling it elsewhere, sir. 191

Fid. What is it you told, sir?

Fad. What I sha'n't tell here, madam. Her angry ladyship must excuse me, faith.

Ros. 'Tis very well, sir!

Fid. Indeed, Rosetta, he knows nothing.

Fad. Nothing in the world, madam, as I hope to be saved. Mine is all hearsay. And, curse upon them! the whole town may be in a lie for any thing I know. So they said of Lady Bridget, that she went off with her footman; but 'twas all slander, for 'twas a horse grenadier, that she bought a commission for last week. 202

Ros. What has Lady Bridget, or the town, to do with Fidelia, sir?

Fad. So I said, madam—the very words. Says I, a woman of the town? Does a slip or two with particulars make a lady a woman of the town? Or, if it did, says I, many a one has taken up and lived honestly afterwards. A woman of the town indeed!

Fid. Hold your licentious tongue, sir! Upon my life, Rosetta, 'tis all malice. 'Tis his own contrivance. I dare him to produce another villain, that's base enough to say this of me. 213

Fad. Right, madam! Stick to that, and, 'egad, I'll be of your side.

[*Aloud in her ear.*

Fid. Insolence ! [*Strikes him.*] Oh, I am hurt beyond all bearing !

Ros. And I, lost in perplexity. If thou art linked with any wretch base enough to contrive this paper, or art thyself the contriver, may poverty and a bad heart be thy companions : but if thou art privy to any thing, that concerns the honour of this family, give it breath, and I'll insure thee both protection and reward.

223

Fid. I dare him to discovery.

Fad. Ladies, I have had the honour of a blow conferred on me by one of you, and am favoured with the offer of protection and reward from the other ; now to convince both, that, in spite of indignities, or obligations, I can keep a secret, if ever I open my lips upon this matter, may plague, famine, and the horned devil consume and seize me. And so, ladies, I take my leave.

[*Exit singing.*]

Ros. What can this fellow mean, Fidelia ! Has he not abused you ?

233

Fid. Is it a doubt then ? Would I had leave to speak !

Ros. And why not, Fidelia ? Promises unjustly extorted, have no right to observance. You have deceived me by your own acknowledgement, and methinks, at such a time, matters of punctilio should give place to reason and necessity.

Fid. I dare not, Rosetta. 'Twould be a crime to your brother, and I owe him more than all the world.

240

Ros. And what are those obligations, Fidelia ?

Fid. Not for me to mention. Indeed, I dare not, Rosetta.

Ros. 'Tis well, madam ! And when you are inclined to admit me to your confidence, I shall perhaps know better how to conduct myself.

[*Going.*]

Enter Young BELMONT, meeting her.

Oh, are you come, brother ! Your friend's sister, your ward there, has wanted you, sir.

Bel. What is it, Fidelia?

Fid. I have no breath to speak it. Your sister, sir, can better inform you. 250

Ros. Read that, sir.

[*Gives him the letter, which he reads to himself.*]

Fid. Now, Rosetta, all shall be set right. Your brother will do me justice, and account for his own conduct.

Ros. I expect so, Fidelia.

Bel. Impertinent! [*Gives back the letter.*] I met Faddle as I came in, and I suppose in pure love of mischief, he has made my believing sister here, a convert to the villany of that letter. But I'll make the rascal unsay every thing he has said, or his bones shall ache for't. [*Going.*]

Fid. Stay, sir, I entreat you. That I am a counterfeit, in part, I have already confessed—— 261

Bel. You have done wrong then.

Fid. But am I a creature of the town, sir? Your sister must learn that from you. You have been once my deliverer—be so now. Tell her, I am poor and miserable, but not dishonest. That I have only consented to deceive her, not desired it. Tell her, I deserve her pity, not her anger. 'Tis my only request. Can you deny it me?

Bel. You have said too much, Fidelia. And for your own sake, I shall forbear to mention what I know of your story. How far your own honour is bound, you are the best judge. But a breach of the most solemn promises, let me tell you, madam, will be a wretched vindication of the innocence you contend for,

Fid. And is this all, sir? 275

Bel. For my own part, I must have better authority than Faddle, or a nameless writer, to believe any thing to your dishonour. And for you, sister, I must not have this lady ill treated. While I am satisfied of her innocence, your

suspensions are impertinent. Nor will I consent to her removal, madam, mark that, whatever you, in your great wisdom, may have privately determined. [Exit.

Ros. You are a villain, brother.

283

Fid. Now I have lost you, Rosetta!

Ros. When you incline to be a friend to yourself, Fidelia, you may find one in me. But while explanations are avoided, I must be allowed to act from my own opinion, and agreeable to the character I am to support. [Exit.

Fid. Then I am wretched! But that's no novelty. I have wandered from my cradle, the very child of misfortune. To retire and weep, must now be my only indulgence. [Exit.

Enter BELMONT.

Bel. Why, what a rogue am I! Here have I thrown a whole family, and that my own too, into perplexities, that innocence can't oppose, nor cunning guard against. And all for what? Why, a woman——Take away that excuse, and the devil himself would be a saint to me: for all the rest is sinning without temptation. In my commerce with the world, I am guarded against the mercenary vices.——I think, I have honour above lying, courage above cruelty, pride without meanness, and honesty above deceit; and yet, throw but coy beauty in my way, and all the vices, by turns, take possession of me. Fortune, fortune, give me success this once—and I'll build churches! 303

Enter FADDLE.

Fad. What, Charles——is the coast clear, and the finishing stroke given to my embassy, hah?

Bel. Thou hast been a most excellent rascal, and, faith, matters seem to be in a promising condition. For I have flung that in Rosetta's way, which, if she keeps her womanhood, will do the business.

Fad. Pr'ythee, what's that, Charles? 310

Bel. Why, I have bid her not to think of parting with Fidelia.

Fad. Nay, then, tip she goes headlong out at window.—But hast thou no bowels, Charles? For, methinks, I begin to feel some twitches of compunction about me.

Bel. I understand you, sir; but I have no more purses.

Fad. Why, look you, Charles, we must find a way to lull this conscience of mine—here will be the devil to do else. That's a very pretty ring, Charles. 319

Bel. Is it so, sir? Hark you, Mr. Dog, if you demur one moment to fetching and carrying in this business as I bid you, you shall find my hand a little heavy upon you.

Fad. Pugh, pox, Charles! cann't a body speak? People may be in good-humour, when they want people to do things for people, methinks.

Bel. Troop this moment, with your rascally conscience, to the King's Arms, and wait there till I come, sir. 327

Fad. Why so I will, Charles—A pox of the swaggering son of a—Not so big neither, if one had but a little courage. [*Aside and going.*]

Bel. Hark you, Faddle—Now I think on't, there is a way yet for thee to make another purse out of this business.

Fad. Why, one would not be a rogue for nothing, methinks.

Bel. I saw Sir Charles going into Fidelia's chamber—thou mayest steal upon them unobserved—they'll have their plots too, I suppose.

Fad. And where am I to come and tell thee, hah!

Bel. At the King's Arms, boy.

Fad. But you'll remember the purse, Charles. 340

Bel. Softly, rascal! [*Exit Fad.*] Why, there it is again, now! I am a fellow of principle! And so I will be, some

time or other. But these appetites are the devil, and at present I am under their direction.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Sir CHARLES and FIDELIA discovered sitting.

Sir Char. He durst not say, directly, you were that creature the letter called you!

Fid. Not in terms, sir; but his concealments struck deeper than the sharpest accusations.

Sir Char. And could Mr. Belmont be silent to all this?

Fid. He said he had his reasons, sir, and it was my part to submit. I had no heart to disoblige him. 351

Sir Char. You are too nice, madam. Rosetta loves you, and should be trusted.

Fid. Alas, sir! if it concerned me only, I should have no concealment.

Sir Char. It concerns you most, madam. I must deal plainly with you. You have deceived your friend; and tho' I believe it not, a severer reproach rests upon you. And shall an idle promise, an extorted one too, and that from a man who solicits your undoing, forbid your vindication? You must think better of it. 361

Fid. 'Tis not an extorted promise, sir, that seals my lips—but I love him—and though he pursues me to my ruin, I will obey him in this, whatever happens. He may desert me, but never shall have reason to upbraid me.

Sir Charles. 'Tis your own cause, madam, and you must act in it as you think proper. Yet still, if I might advise—

Fid. Leave it to time, Sir Charles. And if you believe me innocent, your friendly thoughts of me, and my own conscience, shall keep me cheerful. 370

Enter FADDLE, listening.

Fad. O, pox, is it so! Now for a secret worth twenty pieces!

Sir Char. Has it ever appeared to you, madam, that Faddle was a confidant of Mr. Belmont's?

Fid. Never, sir. On the contrary, a wretch most heartily despised by him.

Fad. If she should be a little mistaken now. [*Aside.*

Sir Char. Can you guess at any other means of his coming to a knowledge of you?

Fid. None that I know of, sir. 380

Fad. Faith, I believe her. [*Aside.*

Sir Char. One question more, madam, and I have done. Did Mr. Belmont ever solicit your removing from this house?

Fid. Never directly, sir. He has often, when we have been alone, quarrelled with himself for bringing me into it.

Sir Char. I thank you, madam. And if my enquiries have been at any time too importunate, allow them to the warmth of an honest friendship: for I have a heart that feels for your distresses, and beats to relieve them. 389

Fid. I have no words, Sir Charles; let my tears thank you.

Sir Char. Be composed, my child. And if Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments ready to receive you, with such welcome, as virtue should find with one who loves it.

Fid. Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with—for this goodness is too much for me.

Fad. And so she's a bit for the old gentleman at last! Rare news for Charles! or with a little addition I shall make it so. But I must decamp, to avoid danger. [*Aside, and exit.*

Sir Char. Dry up your tears, Fidelia. For, if my conjectures are well grounded, before night, perhaps, something

may be done to serve you. And so I leave you to your best thoughts. [Exit.

Fid. Then I have one friend left. How long I am to hold him, Heaven knows. 'Tis a fickle world, and nothing in it is lasting, but misfortune——yet I'll have patience.

That sweet relief, the healing hand of Heav'n

Alone to suff'ring innocence has giv'n ;

Come, friend of virtue, balm of every care,

Dwell in my bosom, and forbid despair.

409

[Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Apartment. Enter Colonel and ROSETTA.

Rosetta.

I tell you, I will not be talked to.

Col. 'Tis my unhappiness, madam, to raise no passion in you, but anger.

Ros. You are mistaken, colonel. I am not angry, tho' I answer so. My gaiety has been disturbed to-day ; and gravity always sits upon me like ill-humour. Fidelia has engrossed me, and you are talking of yourself. What would you have me say ?

Col. That your neglect of me has been dissembled, and that I have leave to love you, and to hope for you. 10

Ros. This is very strange now ! Why 'tis not in your power to avoid loving me, whether you have leave to hope or not. And as to my dissembling, I know nothing of that—all I know is, that I'm a woman, and women, I suppose, dissemble sometimes—I don't pretend to be a bit better than a woman.

Col. Be a kind one, and you're an angel.

Ros. Why there now ! when if I wanted to be an angel,

the very kindness that made me one, would leave me in a month or two, a mere forsaken woman. No, no, colonel ! ignorance is the mother of love, as well as devotion. We are angels before you know us to be women, and less than women, when, you know us to be no angels. If you would be pleased with the tricks of a juggler, never enquire how they are done.

24

Col. Right, madam, where the entertainment consists only in the deceit.

Ros. And philosophers will tell you, that the only happiness of life is to be well deceived.

Col. 'Tis the philosophy of fools, madam. Is the pleasure that arises from virtue a cheat ? Or is there no happiness in conferring obligations, where the receiver wishes to be obliged, and labours to return ? 'Tis the happiness of divinity, to distribute good, and be paid with gratitude.

Ros. But to give all at once, would be to lose the power of obliging.

Col. And to deny all, would be to lose the pleasure of obliging.

Ros. But where the gift is trifling, you know——

Col. That trifle, if lent to another's management, might make both rich.

40

Ros. This is playing at cross-purposes. But if I were inclined to listen, what have you to say in favour of matrimony ?

Col. " To fools, madam, 'tis the jewel of Æsop's cock ;
" but to the wise, a diamond of price, in a skilful hand, to
" enrich life." 'Tis happiness, or misery, as minds are differently disposed. The necessary requisites are love, good sense, and good breeding. The first to unite, the second to advise, and the third to comply. If you add to these, neatness and a competency, beauty will always please, and family cares become agreeable amusements.

50

Ros. And yet I have known a very miserable couple,
“with all these requisites.

“*Col.* Never, if you’ll believe me, Rosetta—They have
“worn them in public, and may have dissembled with suc-
“cess. But marriage-intimacies destroy dissimulation.—
“And if their private hours have known no enjoyment,
“there must have been wanting, either the affection that
“should unite, the understanding that should advise, or the
“complacency that should oblige.”

Ros. Do you know now, that you never pleased me so
much in all your life ? 61

Col. If so, Rosetta, one question, and then to apply.

Ros. How if I should not answer your question ?

Col. ’Tis a fair one, upon my word. Don’t you think,
that you and I could muster up these requisites between us ?

Ros. Let me consider a little—Who must have love, pray ?

Col. Both of us.

Ros. No, I have no mind to have any thing to do with
love. Do you take that, and give understanding, to advise.
“So then you may choose again, and have all the good-
“breeding, for compliance ; then I neatness ; and last of all,
“competency shall be divided between us.” 72

Col. A match, madam, upon your own terms.—“But if
“ever you should take it into your head to dispute love with
“me, what other requisite are you willing to give up for it ?

“*Ros.* Why, neatness, I think ; ’tis of little use to a mar-
“ried woman, you know.

Col. “A trifle, madam.” But when are we to come to-
gether ?

Ros. As soon as we can give proof that these ingredients
are between us—In a few years, perhaps. 81

Col. If our virtues should starve in that time ?

Ros. Psha !—You know nothing of the matter. Sense

will improve every day, and love and good-breeding live an age, if we don't marry then. But we'll have done with these matters; for I can keep the ball up no longer. You did not say Fidelia upbraided me?

Col. The very reverse. 'Twas her only affliction, she said, that you had reason to think hardly of her. 89

Ros. Poor girl! If you would make love to me with success, colonel, clear up these perplexities.—Suppose I was to dismiss my pride a little, and make her a visit with you?

Col. 'Twould be a kind one.

Ros. Lead on then; for, in spite of my resentments, I have no heart to keep from her. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter Young BELMONT and FADDLE.

Bel. If this should be invention, Faddle?

Fad. I tell thee, I was behind the screen, and heard every syllable on't. Why, I'll say it to his face, pr'ythee.

Bel. What, that he proposed to take her into keeping, and that she consented? 100

Fad. Not in those words, man—No, no. Sir Charles is a gentleman of politer elocution. Pray, child, says he, did Young Belmont ever propose your removing from this house? No, sir, says she, but he has cursed himself to damnation for bringing me into it. [*Mimicking Sir Charles and Fidelia.*] Well, child, says he, the thing may be done to night; apartments are ready for you. And then, in a lower voice, he said something about virtue, that I could not very well hear; but I saw it set the girl a crying. And presently, in answer to a whisper of his, I heard her say, in a very pretty manner, that she thought it was too much for her. But what his proposals were, the devil a syllable could I hear. 112

Bel. Ha, ha !—Yonder he is, Faddle, and coming this way. We must not be seen together.

Fad. For a little sport, Charles, suppose I fling myself in his way, and make interest to be commode to him, ha !

Bel. And get thy nose twisted for thy pains ?

Fad. Why, I can run, if I can't fight, pr'ythee.

Bel. Faith, I never doubted thee that way. I'll to my room, then, and wait for thee. 120

Fad. But leave the door open, Charles.

Bel. Ha, ha, ha !—You'll not be tedious, sir. [Exit.

Enter Sir CHARLES.

Fad. If the old gentleman should be in his airs tho'—Servant, servant, Sir Charles.

Sir Char. Oh, sir, you are the man I was looking for !

Fad. If I can be of any service, Sir Charles—What, and so—ha !—Faith, you're a sly one—But you old poachers have such a way with you !—Why here has Charles been racking his brains for ways and means, any time these three months ; and just in the nick, souse comes me down the old kite—and, alack-a-day, poor chick !—the business is done.

Sir Char. Make yourself a little intelligible, sir. 132

Fad. And so, I don't speak plain, ha ?—Oh, the little rogue !—There's more beauty in the veins of her neck, than in a landscape of Claude ; and more music in the smack of her lips, than in all Handel !

Sir Char. Let me understand you, sir.

Fad. Methinks 'twas very laconic, tho'—If Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments ready to receive you [Mimicking Sir Charles.] But a word in your ear, old gentleman—Those apartments won't do. 141

Sir Char. Oh, sir, I begin to be a little in the secret !

Fad. Mighty quick of apprehension, faith !—And the

little innocent!—Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with; for this goodness is too much for me. [*Mimicking Fidelia.*] Upon my soul, you have a great deal of goodness, Sir Charles; a great deal of goodness, upon my soul.

Sir Char. Why, now I understand you, sir. And as these matters may require time, for the sake of privacy we'll shut this door. [*Shuts the door.*]

Fad. Any other time, Sir Charles. But I am really so hurried at present, that—Oh, lord! [*Aside.*]

Sir Char. Why, what does the wretch tremble at?—Broken bones are to be set again; and thou mayest yet die in thy bed. [*Takes hold of him.*] You have been a listener, sir.

Fad. Lord, sir!—Indeed, sir!—Not I, sir! 156

Sir Char. No denial, sir. [*Shakes him.*]

Fad. Oh, sir, I'll confess! I did listen, sir—I did, indeed, sir.

Sir Char. Does your memory furnish you with any other villany of yours, that may save me the trouble of an explanation? 162

Fad. I'll think, sir—What the devil shall I say now? [*Aside.*]

Sir Char. Take care; for every lie thou tellest me, shall be scored ten-fold upon thy flesh. Answer me—How came Mr. Belmont's sister by that anonymous letter?

Fad. Letter, sir!

Sir Char. Whence came it, I say?

Fad. Is there no remission, sir?

Sir Char. None that thou canst deserve: for honesty is not in thy nature. 171

Fad. If I confess?

Sir Char. Do so then, and trust me.

Fad. Yes, and so be beat to mummy by Charles—If you won't tell him, sir—

Sir Char. I'll think on't.

Fad. Why then, sir——But he'll certainly be the death of me——It was by his contrivance I wrote the letter, and sent it from the King's Arms.

Sir Char. Very well, sir. And did you know to what purpose it was sent ? 181

Fad. Yes, sir ; it was to alarm the Family against Fidelia, that Charles might get her into private lodgings——That was all, as I hope to be sav'd, sir.

Sir Char. Was it, sir ? And upon what principles were you an accomplice in this villany ?

Fad. I was out of money, sir, and not over-valiant ; and Charles promised and threatened——'Twas either a small purse, or a great cudgel——And so, I took one to avoid t'other, sir.

Sir Char. And what dost thou deserve for this ? 190

Fad. Pray, sir, consider my honest confession, and think me paid already, if you please, sir.

Sir Char. For that thou art safe. If thou wouldst continue so, avoid me. Begone, I say !

Fad. Yes, sir—and well off too, faith. [*Aside, and going.*]

Sir Char. Yet stay——If thou art open to any sense of shame, hear me.

Fad. I will, sir. 198

Sir Char. Thy life is a disgrace to humanity. A foolish prodigality makes thee needy ; need makes thee vicious, and both make thee contemptible. Thy wit is prostituted to slander and buffoonery ; and thy judgments, if thou hast any, to meanness and villany. Thy betters that laugh with thee, laugh at thee : and who are they ? The fools of quality at court, and those who ape them in the city. The varieties of thy life are pityful rewards, and painful abuses ; for the same trick that gets thee a guinea to-day, shall get thee beaten out of doors to-morrow. Those who caress thee are enemies to

themselves; and when they know it, will be so to thee: in thy distresses they'll desert thee, and leave thee, at last, to sink in thy poverty, unregarded and unpitied. If thou canst be wise, think of me, and be honest. [Exit.

Fad. I'll endeavour it, sir—A most excellent discourse, faith; and mighty well there was not a larger congregation. —So, so!—I must be witty, with a vengeance!—What the devil shall I say to Charles, now?—And here he comes, like poverty and the plague, to destroy me at once—Let me see—Ay—as truth has saved me with one, I'll try what a little lying will do with t'other.

Enter Young BELMONT.

Ha, ha, ha! Oh, the rarest sport, Charles!

220

Bel. What sport, pr'ythee?

Fad. I shall burst!—Ha, ha, ha!—The old gentleman has let me into all his secrets.

Bel. And, like a faithful confidant, you are going to reveal them.

Fad. Not a breath, Charles—Only that I am in commission, my dear, that's all.

Bel. So, I suppose, indeed.

228

Fad. Nay, Charles, if I tell thee a lie, cut my throat. The short of the matter is, the old poacher, finding me in the secret, thought it the wisest way to make a confidant of me; and this very moment, my dear, I am upon the wing to provide lodgings for the occasion.

Bel. If this should be apocryphal, as my father says—

Fad. Gospel every syllable, as I hope to be saved—Why, what in the devil's name have I to do, to be inventing lies for thee?—But here comes the old gentleman again, faith—Oh, the devil! [*Aside.*]—Pry'thee, stroke him down a little, Charles, if 'tis only to see how awkward he takes it—

I must about the lodgings, ha, ha, ha!—But if ever I set foot in this house again, may a horse-pond be my portion.

[*Aside, and exit.*]

Enter Sir CHARLES, with a Letter in his Hand, speaking to a Servant.

Sir Char. Bid him wait a little, and I'll attend him. [*Exit Servant.*] What can this mean?—Let me read it again. [*Reads.*] 'If the interest of Sir Charles Raymond's family be dear to him, he will follow the bearer with the same haste that he would shun ruin.'—That he would shun ruin!—This is strange! But, be it as it will, I have another concern that must take place first.

Bel. Sir Charles, your servant. Any news, sir? 249

Sir Char. Not much, sir; only, that a young gentleman of honour and condition had introduced a virtuous lady to his family; and when a worthless fellow defamed her innocence, and robbed her of her quiet, he, who might have dried her tears, and vindicated her virtue, forsook her in her injuries, to debauch his mind with the assassin of her reputation.

Bel. If your tale ends there, sir, you have learned but half on't; for my advices add, that a certain elderly gentleman, of title and fortune, pitying the forlorn circumstances of the lady, has offered her terms of friendship and accommodation: and this night she bids farewell to maidenhood and a female bedfellow in private apartments.

Sir Char. You treat me lightly, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. You use me roughly, Sir Charles.

Sir Char. How, sir?

Bel. In the person of Fidelia.

Sir Char. Make it appear, and you shall find me a very boy in my submissions. 268

Bel. 'Twould be time lost ; and I can employ it to advantage. But remember, sir, that this house is another's, not yours ; that Fidelia is under my direction, not yours ; and that my will must determine her removal, not yours.

Sir Char. Is she your slave, sir, to bear the burden of your insults without complaining, or the right of choosing another master !

275

Bel. And who shall be that master ! You, sir ? The poor bird, that would escape the kite, is like to find warm protection from the fox.

Sir Cha. Pr'ythee, think me a man, and treat me as such.

Bel. As the man I have found you, Sir Charles. Your grave deportment, and honesty of heart, are covers only for wantonness and design. You preach up temperance and sobriety to youth, to monopolize, in age, the vices you are unfit for.

284

Sir Char. Hark you, young man—you must curb this impetuous spirit of yours, or I shall be tempted to teach you manners in a method disagreeable to you.

Bel. Learn them first yourself, sir. You say Fidelia is insulted by me ; how is it made out ? Why, truly, I would possess her without marriage !—I would so. Marriage is the thing I would avoid : 'tis the trick of priests, to make men miserable, and women insolent. I have dealt plainly, and told her so. Have you said as much ? No : you wear the face of honesty, to quiet her fears ; that, when your blood boils, and security has stolen away her guard, you may rush at midnight upon her beauties, and do the ravage you are sworn to protect her from.

297

Sir Cha. Hold, sir. You have driven me beyond the limits of my patience ; and I must tell you, young man, that the obligations I owe your father demand no returns that manhood must blush to make. Therefore hold, I say ; for

I have a sword to do me justice, though it should leave my dearest friend childless.

Bel. I fear it not.

Sir Char. Better tempt it not ; for your fears may come too late. You have dealt openly with Fidelia, you say : deal so for once with me, and tell me, whence came that vile scroll to Rosetta this afternoon ?

Bel. It seems, then, I wrote it. You dare not think so.

Sir Char. I dare speak, as well as think, where honour directs me. 311

Bel. You are my accuser then ?

Sir Char. When I become so, I shall take care, Mr. Belmont, that the proof waits upon the accusation.

Bel. I disdain the thought.

Sir Char. Better have disdained the deed.

Bel. I do both—and him that suspects me.

Sir Char. Away ! You fear him that suspects you ; and have disdained neither the thought nor the deed. 319

Bel. How, sir ? [Drawing.

Sir Char. Put up your sword, young man, and use it in a better cause : this is a vile one. And now you shall be as still through shame, as you have been loud through pride.—You should have known, that cowards are unfit for secrets.

Bel. And if I had, sir !

Sir Char. Why, then, sir, you had not employed such a wretch as Faddle to write that letter to Rosetta.

Bel. The villain has betrayed me ! But I'll be sure on't. [Aside.]—He durst not say I did. 328

Sir Char. You should rather have built your innocence upon the probability of his unsaying it ; for the same fear that made him confess to me, may make him deny every syllable to you.

Bel. What has he confessed, sir ?

Sir Char. That to-day, at dinner, you prompted the letter that he wrote. That your design was, by vilifying Fidelia, to get her dismissed, and the dismissal to prepare her ruin in private lodgings. Was this your open behaviour, sir?

Bel. Go on with your upbraidings, sir. Speak to me as you will, and think of me as you will. I have deserved shame, and am taught patience. 340

Sir Char. Was this well done? Did her innocence, and her undissembled love, deserve this treatment?

Bel. Proceed, sir.

Sir Char. No, sir, I have done. If you have sense of your past conduct, you want not humanity to heal the wounds it has given. Something must be done, and speedily.

Bel. What reparation can I make her?

Sir Char. Dry up her tears, by an immediate acknowledgment of her wrongs.

Bel. I would do more. 350

Sir Char. Bid her farewell, then, and consent to her removal.

Bel. I cannot, sir.

Sir Char. Her peace demands it: but we'll talk of that hereafter. If you have honour, go and do her justice, and undeceive your abused sister. Who waits there?—Indeed you have been to blame, Mr. Belmont.

Enter Servant.

Shew me to the bearer of this letter. [*Exit with the Serv.*]

Bel. Why, what a thing am I!—But 'tis the trick of vice to pay her votaries with shame; and I am rewarded amply. To be a fool's fool too! to link myself in villany with a wretch below the notice of a man! and to be outwitted by him!—So, so!—I may have abused Sir Charles too—Let me think a little—I'll to Fidelia instantly, and

tell her what a rogue I have been. But will that be reparation?—I know but of one way; and there my pride stops me—And then I lose her—Worse and worse!—I'll think no more on't; but away to her chamber, and bid her think for me. [Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter Sir ROGER and Servant. Sir ROGER with a Letter in his Hand.

Sir Roger.

VERY fine doings, indeed! But I'll teach the dog to play his tricks upon his father. A man had better let a lion loose in his family than a town-rake. Where is Sir Charles, I say?

Serv. This moment come in, sir.

Sir Ro. And why did not you say so, blockhead? Tell him I must speak with him this moment.

Serv. The servant says he waits for an answer to that letter, sir. 9

Sir Ro. Do as I bid you, rascal, and let him wait. Fly, I say. *[Exit Servant.]* The riotous young dog! to bring his harlots home with him! But I'll out with the baggage.

Enter Sir CHARLES.

Oh, Sir Charles, 'tis every word as we said this morning!—The boy has stolen her, and I am to be ruined by a law-suit.

Sir Char. A law-suit! With whom, sir?

Sir Ro. Read, read, read! *[Gives the letter.]*

Sir Char. [Reads.] 'I am guardian to that Fidelia, whom your son has stolen from me, and you unjustly detain. If

you deny her to me, the law shall right me. I wait your answer by the bearer, to assert my claim in the person of

GEORGE VILLIARD.'

Why, then my doubts are at an end. But I must conceal my transports, and wear a face of coolness, while my heart overflows with passion. [Aside.

Sir Ro. What, not a word, Sir Charles?—There's a piece of work for you!—And so I am to be ruined. 25

Sir Char. Do you know this Villiard, Sir Roger?

Sir Ro. Whether I do or not, sir, the slut shall go to him this moment.

Sir Char. Hold a little. This gentleman must be heard, sir, and, if his claim be good, the lady restored.

Sir Ro. Why, e'en let her go as it is, Sir Charles. 31

Sir Char. That would be too hasty. Go in with me, sir, and we'll consider how to write to him.

Sir Ro. Well, well, well—I wish she was gone, though.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter Young BELMONT and FIDELIA.

Bel. Ask me not why I did it, but forgive me.

Fid. No, sir, 'tis impossible. I have a mind, Mr. Belmont, above the wretchedness of my fortunes; and helpless as I am, I can feel in this breast a sense of injuries, and spirit to resent them.

Bel. Nay, but hear me, Fidelia. 40

Fid. Was it not enough to desert me in my distresses, to deny me the poor request I made you, but must you own yourself the contriver of that letter? 'Tis insupportable! If I consented to assume a rank that belonged not to me, my

heart went not with the deceit. You would have it so, and I complied. 'Twas shame enough, that I had deceived your sister; it needed not, that I should bring a prostitute to her friendship. This was too much, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. Yet hear me, I say.

49

Fid. And then, to leave me to the malice of that wretch; to have my supposed infamy the tavern jest of his licentious companions!——I never flattered myself, Mr. Belmont, with your love; but knew not till now, that I have been the object of your hatred.

Bel. My hatred!——But I have deserved your hardest thoughts of me.——And yet, believe me, Fidelia, when I used you worst, I loved you most.

Fid. Call it by another name; for love delights in acts of kindness. Were yours such, sir?—And yet, must I forget all—for I owe you more than injuries can cancel, or gratitude repay.

61

Bel. Generous creature! This is to be amiable indeed! But must we part, Fidelia?

Fid. I have resolved it, sir, and you must yield to it.

Bel. Never, my sweet obstinate.

Fid. That I have loved you, 'tis my pride to acknowledge; but that must be forgot. And the hard task remains, to drive the passion from my breast, while I cherish the memory of your humane offices. This day, then, shall be the last of our meeting. Painful though it may be, yet your own, mine, and the family's peace require it. Heaven, in my distresses, has not left me destitute of a friend; or if it had, I can find one in my innocence, to make even poverty supportable.

Bel. You have touch'd me, Fidelia; and my heart yields to your virtues. Here, then, let my follies have an end; and thus let me receive you as the everlasting partner of my heart and fortune.

[Offers to embrace her.]

Fid. No, sir. The conduct that has hitherto secured my own honour shall protect yours. I have been the innocent disturber of your family; but never will consent to load it with disgrace. 81

Bel. Nor can it be disgraced. I mean to honour it, Fidelia: you must comply.

Fid. And repay generosity with ruin! No, Mr. Belmont; I can forego happiness, but never can consent to make another miserable.

Bel. When I repent, Fidelia!—But see where my sister comes, to be an advocate for my wishes.

Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. Oh, sir, you are found! You have done nobly, indeed! But your thefts are discovered, sir.—This lady's guardian has a word or two for you. 91

Bel. Her guardian! Upon my life, Fidelia, Villiard! He comes as I could wish him.

Ros. Say so when you have answered him, brother. Am I to lose you at last then, Fidelia? And yet my hopes flatter me, that this too, as well as the letter is a deceit. May I think so, Fidelia?

Fid. As truly as of your goodness, Rosetta.—Your brother will tell you all. Oh, he has made me miserable by his generosity! 100

Bel. This pretended guardian, sister, is a villain, and Fidelia, the most abused of women. Bounteous he has been indeed; but to his vices, not his virtues, she stands indebted for the best of educations. The story will amaze you. At twelve years old—

Ros. He's here, brother, and with him my papa, Sir Charles, and the colonel. Now, Fidelia.

Enter Sir ROGER, Sir CHARLES, the Colonel, and VILLIARD.

Sir Cha. If that be the lady, Mr. Villiard, and your claim as you pretend, Sir Roger has told you, she shall be restored, sir. 110

Sir Ro. Yes, sir, and your claim as you pretend.

Vil. 'Tis well, madam, I have found you. [*Going to Fidelia.*] This, gentlemen, is the lady; and this the robber who stole her from me. [*Pointing to Belmont.*] By violence, and at midnight he stole her.

Bel. Stole her, sir!

Vil. By violence, and at midnight, I say.

Bel. You shall be heard, sir.

Vil. Ay, sir, and satisfied, I stand here, gentlemen, to demand my ward. 120

Sir Char. Give us proofs, sir, and you shall have justice.

Vil. Demand them there, sir. [*Pointing to Bel. and Fid.*] I have told you, I am robbed: if you deny me justice, the law shall force it.

Sir Char. A little patience, sir. [*To Villiard.*] Do you know this gentleman, Fidelia?

Fid. Too well, sir.

Sir Char. By what means, sir, did you become her guardian? [*To Vil.*]

Vil. By the will of her who bore her, sir. 130

Sir Char. How will you reply to this, Fidelia?

Fid. With truth and honesty, sir.

Bel. Let him proceed, madam.

Vil. Ay, sir, to your part of the story; tho' both are practised in a damn'd falsehood to confront me.

Bel. Falsehood!—But I am cool, sir. Proceed.

Vil. My doors were broke open at midnight by this gentleman, [*Pointing to Bel.*] myself wounded, and Fidelia ravished

from me. He ran off with her in his arms. Nor, till this morning, in a coach, which brought her hither, have my eyes ever beheld her. 141

Sir Ro. A very fine business, truly, young man! [*To Bel.*

Fid. He has abused you, sir, Mr. Belmont is noble——

Bel. No matter, Fidelia. Well, sir, you have been robbed, you say? [*To Vil.*

Vil. And will have justice, sir.

Bel. Take it from this hand then. [*Drawing.*

Sir Char. Hold, sir, This is adding insult to injuries. Fidelia must be restored, sir.

Sir Ro. Ay, sir, Fidelia must be restored. 150

Fid. But not to him. Hear but my story, and, if I deceive you, let your friendship forsake me. He bought me, gentlemen, for the worst of purposes; he bought me of the worst of women. A thousand times has he confessed it, and as often pleaded his right of purchase to undo me. Whole years have I endured his brutal solicitation; till, tired with entreaties, he had recourse to violence. The scene was laid, and I had been ruined beyond redress, had not my cries brought the generous Mr. Belmont to my relief. He was accidentally passing by, and alarmed, at midnight, with a woman's shrieks, he forced open the door, and saved me from destruction. 162

Sir Char. How will you answer this sir? [*To Vil.*

Vil. 'Tis false, sir. That woman was her nurse: these hands delivered her to her care.

Fid. Alas, gentlemen, she found me a helpless infant at her door! So she has always told me; and at twelve years old, betrayed me to that monster.—Search out the woman, if she be alive, and let me be confronted. 169

Sir Ro. If this be true, Sir Charles, I shall bless myself as long as I live, for getting my boy. [*Weeps.*

Vil. 'Tis false, I say ; a damn'd contrivance to escape me. I stand here, sir, to demand my ward. [*To Sir Ro.*] Deny her to me at your peril.

Bel. He shall have my life as soon.

Vil. Hark you, sir. [*To Sir Ro.*] There are things called laws, to do right to the injured. My appeal shall be to them.

178

Sir Char. That woman must be produced, sir. [*To Vil.*

Vil. And shall, sir, in a court of justice. Our next meetings shall be there. Till then, madam, you are secure. [*To Fid.*

Bel. Take care that you are so, sir, when we have occasion to call upon you. You shall have justice.

Vil. And will, sir, in defiance of you. [*Exit.*

Sir Char. Fear not, Fidelia ; we believe, and will protect you.

Ros. My sweet girl !——But whence came the letter this afternoon ?

Bel. 'Twas I that wrote it.

Ros. Oh, monstrous !——And could you be that wretch, brother ?

191

Bel. And will atone for it, by the only recompence that's left me.

Sir Ro. And what recompence will you make her, ha, rogue ?

Bel. I have injured her, sir, and must do her justice. If you would retrieve my honour, or promote my happiness, give me your consent, sir, to make her your daughter.

Ros. Why, that's my brother ! Now I am sure she's innocent. And so you will, papa.

200

Sir Ro. But positively I will not, child. Marry her, indeed ! What, without a shilling ? and be ruined by Villiard into the bargain ! If your story be true, Fidelia, you shall be provided for. But no marrying, d'ye hear, child ?

Fid. You need not doubt me, sir.

Sir Ro. Why, that's well said, Fidelia.

Ros. And deserves reward, sir. Pray, Sir Charles, let us have your thoughts upon this matter.

Sir Char. Your brother's proposal, madam, and Fidelia's denial, are as generous as your father's determination is just.

Bel. I expected as much, sir.

211

Sir Char. My opinion was asked, sir.

Bel. And you have given it. I thank you, sir.

Sir Char. Think of Villiard, Mr. Belmont; his claim may be renewed, sir.

Bel. Fidelia has deceived you then. You think otherwise, Sir Charles.

Col. My life upon her innocence!—And where the fortune on one side is more than sufficient, how light is all addition to it, compared to the possession of her one loves! Let me, sir, be happy in Rosetta, [*To Sir Roger.*] and give her fortune to Fidelia, to make her an object worthy of your son.

Ros. There's a colonel for you!—What says my sweet Fidelia.

224

Fid. I intended to be silent, madam; but 'tis now my duty to speak. You have been my deliverer, sir, from the worst of evils; [*To Bel.*] and now would nobly augment the first obligation by a generosity too mighty for acknowledgment. If I had the wealth of worlds, it would be too little to bestow, but poor and friendless as I am, my heart may break, but never shall consent to make my benefactor a penitent to his virtues.

Sir Char. 'Tis nobly said, Fidelia. And now, Mr. Belmont, our disputes will soon be at an end. You have this day, sir, reproached me often; it remains now that you should know me as I am.

236

Bel. If I have erred, sir——

Sir Char. Interrupt me not, but hear me. I have watched your follies with concern; and 'tis with equal pleasure I congratulate your return to honour. If I have opposed your generous inclinations, it was only to give them strength. I am now a suppliant to your father for the happiness you desire.

243

Bel. This is noble, Sir Charles!

Sir Char. And to make Fidelia worthy of his son, a fortune shall be added equal to his warmest expectations.

Sir Ro. Why ay, Sir Charles, let that be made out, and I shall have no objection.

Fid. What mean you, sir?

[*To Sir Char.*

Sir Char. A minute more, and my sweet girl shall be instructed. You have often told me, sir, [*To Bel.*] that I had an interest in this lovely creature. I have an interest! an interest that you shall allow me! My heart dotes upon her! Oh, I can hold no longer!—My daughter! my daughter!

[*Running to Fidelia, and embracing her.*

Fid. Your daughter, sir!

255

Sir Char. Oh, my sweet child!—Sir Roger, Mr. Belmont, my son!—These tears!—these tears!—Fidelia is my daughter!

Col. Is't possible?

Sir Char. Let not excess of wonder overpower you, Fidelia, for I have a tale to tell, that will exceed belief.

Fid. Oh, sir!

Sir Char. Upbraid me not, that I have kept it a moment from your knowledge—'twas a hard trial! and while my tongue was taught dissimulation, my heart bled for a child's distresses.

266

Bel. Torture us not, sir, but explain this wonder!

Sir Char. My tears must have their way first—O, my child! my child! [*Turning to Sir Roger and the rest.*—Know

then, that wicked woman, so often mentioned, was my Fidelity's governante. When my mistaken zeal drove me into banishment, I left her, an infant, to her care—To secure some jewels of value I had lodged with her, she became the woman you have heard—My child was taught to believe she was a foundling—her name of Harriet changed to Fidelity—and to lessen my solicitude for the theft, a letter was dispatched to me in France, that my infant daughter had no longer a being. Thus was the father robbed of his child, and the brother taught to believe he had no sister! 279

Fid. Am I that sister, and that daughter?—Oh, Heavens!

[*Kneels.*

Bel. [*Running to her, and raising her.*] Be composed, my life! A moment's attention more, and your transports shall have a loose. Proceed, sir!

Sir Char. Where she withdrew herself, I could never learn. At twelve years old she sold her, as you have heard, and never till yesterday, made enquiry about her. 'Twas then, that a sudden fit of sickness brought her to repentance. She sent for Villiard, who told her minutely what had happened. The knowledge of her deliverance gave her some consolation. But more was to be done yet. She had information of my pardon and return, and ignorant of my child's deliverer, or the place of her conveyance, she at last determined to unburthen herself to me. A letter was brought to me this afternoon, conjuring me to follow the bearer with the same haste that I would shun ruin. I did follow him, and received from this wretched woman the story I have told you. 296

Fid. Oh, my heart!—My father! [*Kneels.*] Have I at last found you! And were all my sorrows past meant only to endear the present transport—'Tis too much for me.

Sir Char. Rise, my child! To find thee thus virtuous, in the midst of temptations, and thus lovely, in the midst of

poverty and distress——after an absence of eighteen melancholy years, when imaginary death had torn thee from my hopes——to find thee thus unexpectedly, and thus amiable, is happiness that the uninterrupted enjoyments of the fairest life never equalled !

308

Fid. What must be mine then ! Have I a brother too !
 [*Turning to the Colonel.*] Oh, my kind fortune !

Col. My sister ! [*Embracing her.*]

Fid. Still there is a dearer claim than all, and now I can acknowledge it. My deliverer !

Bel. And husband, Fidelia ! Let me receive you as the richest gift of fortune !

[*Catching her in his arms.*]

Ros. My generous girl ! The pride of your alliance is my utmost boast, as it is my brother's happiness.

Sir Ro. I have a right in her too, for now you are my daughter, Fidelia.

[*Kisses her.*]

Fid. I had forgot, sir.—If you will receive me as such, you shall find my gratitude in my obedience.

319

Sir Char. Take her, Mr. Belmont, and protect the virtue you have tried.

[*Joining their hands.*]

Bel. The study of my life, sir, shall be to deserve her.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta ! yet it still remains with you to make this day's happiness complete—I have a brother that loves you.

Ros. I would be Fidelia's sister every way ! So take me while I am warm, colonel !

[*Giving him her hand.*]

Col. And when we repent, Rosetta, let the next minute end us.

Ros. With all my heart !

330

Fid. Now, Rosetta, we are doubly sisters !

Sir Char. And may your lives and your affections know an end together.

Bel. [*Taking Fidelia by the hand.*] And now, Fidelia, what

you have made me, take me, a convert to honour ! I have at last learnt, that custom can be no authority for vice ; and, however the mistaken world may judge, he who solicits pleasure at the expence of innocence, is the vilest of betrayers.

*Yet savage man, the wildest beast of prey,
Assumes the face of kindness to betray ;
His giant strength against the weak employs,
And woman, whom he should protect destroys.*

340

[Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

*I KNOW you all expect, from seeing me,
An Epilogue, of strictest purity;
Some formal lecture, spoke with prudish face,
To shew our present joking, giggling race;
True joy consists in—gravity and grace!
But why am I for ever made the tool
Of every squeamish, moralizing fool?
Condemn'd to sorrow all my life, must I
Ne'er make you laugh, because I make you cry?
Madam (say they), your face denotes your heart,
'Tis yours to melt us in the mournful part.
So from the looks our hearts they prudish deem!
Alas, poor souls!—we are not what we seem!
Tho' prudence oft our inclination smothers,
We grave ones love a joke—as well as others.
From such dull stuff, what profit can you reap?
You cry—'Tis very fine—[Yawns.]—and fall asleep.
Happy that bard!—blest with uncommon art,
Whose wit can cheer, and not corrupt the heart!
Happy that play'r, whose skill can chase the spleen,
And leave no worse inhabitant within.
'Mongst friends, our author is a modest man,
But wicked wits will cavil at his plan.
Damn it (says one), this stuff will never pass,
The girl wants nature, and the rake's an ass.*

*Had I, like Belmont, heard a damsel's cries,
I would have pink'd her keeper, seiz'd the prize,
Whipt to a coach, not valu'd tears a farthing,
But drove away like smoke—to Covent-Garden;
There to some house convenient would have carry'd her,
And then—dear soul!—the devil should have marry'd her.
But this our author thought too hard upon her;
Besides, his spark, forsooth, must have some honour:
The fool's a fabulist!—and deals in fiction;
Or he had giv'n him vice—without restriction.
Of fable, all his characters partake,
Sir Charles is virtuous—and for Virtue's sake;
Nor vain, nor blust'ring is the soldier writ,
His rake has conscience, modesty, and wit.
The ladies too!—how oddly they appear!
His prude is chaste, and his coquette sincere:
In short, so strange a group ne'er trod the stage,
At once to please, and satirize the age!
For you, ye fair, his muse has chiefly sung,
'Tis you have touch'd his heart, and tun'd his tongue;
The sex's champion, let the sex defend,
A soothing poet is a charming friend:
Your favours, here bestow'd, will meet reward,
So as you love dear flatt'ry—save your bard.*

THE END.

7 JUL 52

